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Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 ICA-11
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R 081606Z SEP 78
FM AMEMBASSY DUBLIN
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1023
INFO AMEMBASSY LONDON
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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PINT, EI, UK, PEPR
SUBJECT: CALLAGHAN DECISION ON UK ELECTION: IRISH PRESS EDITORIALS ON NORTHERN IRELAND ASPECT

1. TWO OF THREE DUBLIN DAILIES, EDITORIALIZING SEPTEMBER 8 ON PRIME MINISTER CALLAGHAN'S DECISION NOT TO CALL AUTUMN ELECTION IN UK, MENTION NORTHERN IRELAND ONLY IN PASSING. IRISH INDEPENDENT NOTES THAT NORTH WILL HAVE TO EXIST IN VACUUM AWHILE LONGER. IRISH TIMES STATES UNIONIST MP'S HAVE TAKEN LINE THAT THERE IS NO GOOD REASON FOR PUTTING PRESENT UK GOVERNMENT OUT OF OFFICE; IT ALSO ADDS THAT IT WOULD BE DANGEROUS FOR CALLAGHAN TO ASSUME UNIONIST ACQUIESCENCE. "THE CONSERVATIVES HAVE BEEN WOOING THE UNIONISTS WITH SWEET TALK ABOUT THEIR INTENTIONS TOWARD THE NORTH AND MAY HAVE WON THEM OVER BY THE TIME THE FIRST CRISIS COMES."

2. IRISH PRESS (CLOSE TO GOVERNING FIANNA FAIL PARTY) DEVOTES MUCH OF ITS COMMENT TO NORTHERN IRELAND ASPECT. INTER ALIA IT ASSERTS THAT
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THE POSTPONEMENT DECISION, MADE FOR DOMESTIC REASONS, IS NOT ONE THAT CAN BE WELCOMED WHEN VIEWED FROM A NORTHERN MINORITY OR DUBLIN VANTAGE POINT. THIS MEANS THAT WESTMINSTER POLICY ON THE NORTH, "WHICH, AS THE DAILY MIRROR RECENTLY REMARKED, IS A POLICY OF NOT HAVING A POLICY," WILL CONTINUE. IN SITUATION OF POLITICAL

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STALEMATE MEN OF VIOLENCE "WILL ASSUME THE POWER AND INFLUENCE THAT, THROUGH IRRESPONSIBLE NEGLECT OF PROBLEM BY CALLAGHAN CABINET, IS BEING DENIED LOCAL MINORITY AND MAJORITY POLITICANS."

3. COMMENT: IRISH PRESS EDITORIAL IS PERHAPS TOO SWEEPING IN DESCRIBING ATTITUDE OF SOUTH AND NORTHERN MINORITY TOWARD CALLAGHAN DECISION TO POSTPONE ELECTIONS. MANY HERE WERE CONCERNED THAT CONSERVATIVES COULD WELL WIN AN AUTUMN ELECTION AND, MORE PARTICULARLY, THAT THIS MIGHT RESULT IN AIREY NEAVE'S APPOINTMENT AS NORTHERN IRELAND SECRETARY OF STATE. IN A CHANCE ENCOUNTER SEPTEMBER 7, SDLP LEADER JOHN HUME TOLD EMBOFF IT LOOKED LIKE CONSERVATIVES WOULD WIN OCTOBER ELECTIONS AND NEAVE AS NORTHERN IRELAND SECRETARY "WOULD BE DISASTROUS FOR US." SHANNON

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Draft Date: 08 sep 1978
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